

What is IPM?

IPM stands for Integrated Pest Management. In IPM, we learn about our pests and select the best control methods to manage pests with the least effect to people, pets and the environment. By anticipating and preventing pest activity and combining several pest control methods, you can achieve long-term results.

Steps for Successful IPM



Inspect Outdoors and Indoors

To get rid of pests you always start with an inspection.

Look for:

- ✓ pests and signs of pests: ant trails, dead insects, rodent droppings
- ✓ damage caused by pests: food eaten or holes in clothing, chewing on plant leaves
- ✓ conditions good for pests: wet areas, food containers, pet food or garbage left open, too much mulch next to buildings and plants

You are investigating the situation. Ask other people at the home or school what they have seen.



Learn about your Pests

Identify what pest or pests you have. Learning the biology of the pest tells you how fast it reproduces, where it likes to live, and what it likes to eat. You will use this information to choose the best ways to manage the pest. The [Pest Management](#) section of this website can help you identify pests.



Decide if you have a Problem

Most pests are just a nuisance, but some can cause serious health problems. Rats, mice and cockroaches can cause diseases and asthma. You need to get rid of these pests. Carpenter ants and termites can cause structural damage if they nest in a building. If you see these insects, you may need to check further to see if there are nests or colonies indoors. Other pests like Asian lady beetles and sowbugs do not cause damage or disease. You may be able to tolerate a few of these.



Keep Track of Your Pests

Monitoring is a key part of IPM. One way is to place sticky traps near the places that you think the pests are living or traveling. This helps you learn where most of the pests are and if your control methods are working.



Choose the Best Management Options

You want to control the pests without harming people, pets, or the other creatures and plants that share our environment. Do this by choosing the least hazardous method of pest control. Prevention is the best place to start.

Prevent pests before they become a problem

For indoor pests...

- ✓ Frequently clean to eliminate food and some of the hiding places for pests. Remember, a crumb to you can be a feast for pests.
- ✓ Fix leaks to get rid of water which all pests need. Many pests like to live in damp places. Make certain water drains away from your home.
- ✓ Remove clutter indoors and outdoors. Debris or weeds and plants right next to the building provide hiding places for pests and spots where they can store or find food.
- ✓ Deny entry into the home. Caulk, and fill openings in roofs, walls and foundations. Repair broken windows. Install door sweeps. Screen windows and crawl space vents. Trim bushes away from exterior siding and roofs.

For outdoor pests...

- ✓ Choose plants that will grow well in the planting area and that usually have few or no problems.
- ✓ Properly water, fertilize and prune plants to keep them healthy and less likely to have problems.

Eliminate the existing population

If the pest problem does not go away after removal of food, water, shelter and entry, you may need to remove the pests.

- ✓ Trapping can be used for monitoring and for control. Using sticky traps, glue boards, snap traps and live traps can tell you exactly what kind of pests you have. You can also get rid of some or all of the pests this way.
- ✓ Using a biological control is one way to manage the pest. For example, there are bacteria called *Bacillus thuringiensis* or B.t. that can be applied to control certain insects, such as tent caterpillars.
- ✓ Pesticides are sometimes used in IPM if other methods cannot control the problem. Choose the least hazardous products and minimize any exposure to people. Pesticides can harm people and the environment if not used carefully. Read and heed all instructions on the pesticide label.
- ✓ In some cases, it may be necessary to hire a pest control operator (PCO). See [Hiring a Pest Management Company](#).



Evaluate

Check often to see if you still have the pest problem. Determine which control methods work best and remember that it is much easier to get rid of a small number of pests than a huge number.